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Fulbright Says Moyers Paper Tried 'Smear'

WASHINGTON (AP) —Sen. J. W. Fulbright accuses a newspaper published by an ex-aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson of trying to discredit him, saying it quoted out of context an off-the-record interview.

Editor William S. McIlwain of Newsday, a Garden City, N. Y., daily published by former presidential press secretary Bill D. Moyers—said the interview was on the record and its story "accurate and entirely in context."

At issue was yesterday's dispatch from Washington by Newsday political writer Frank Lynn quoting Fulbright as saying some government officials view Vietnam as "a nice little war, not too much killing, but still a big help to the economy."

THE STORY said Fulbright specified Sens. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga., and Henry Jackson, D-Wash., and Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, D-S.C., as among backers of Johnson's policies whose home areas benefitted from war-generated Defense Department contracts.

Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a persistent congressional foe of Johnson's Vietnam policies, said of the story: "I can only assume that this may be an effort to discredit me because I am critical of administration policy in Vietnam."

"I did have a background and off-the-record luncheon conversation with Mr. Lynn. The publication of out of context statements which I am alleged to have made is most regrettable," the Arkansas Democrat said in a statement.

FULBRIGHT SAID nothing he told Lynn about members of Congress or government officials was intended "in any way to impugn their motives, whatever positions they have taken regarding the Vietnam war.

"If anything attributed to me in this story in any way reflects upon the honesty, integrity, or motives of any member of Congress or official of this government, I did not intend it."

He apologized to his colleagues "for any embarrassment or unwarranted attention" the article may have caused them and said they "are aware that in the atmosphere in which we operate we are often misquoted or misinterpreted."